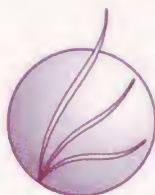


**The  
V. Sarajishvili  
Tbilisi State  
Conservatoire**

**International  
Research  
Center for  
Traditional  
Polyphony**

**BULLETIN**



TBILISI. DECEMBER. 2005

**№3**

3. Safeguarding and Promotion of Georgian Polyphony - Under UNESCO's Patronage
7. Georgian Traditional Music in 2005
10. Presentation of the Book "Georgian Folk Music From Avksenti Megreldze's Archives " and the Debut of the Students' Folk Ensemble
12. 2005-2006 National Exhibition-Festival of Georgian Folklore
13. The 80th Anniversary of the Song and Dance Ensemble Sinatle
15. Distribution of Vocal Polyphony among the World's Musical Cultures
19. Georgian Ethnomusicologist. Grigol Chkhikvadze
22. Field Expedition in Sagarejo District (Kakheti)
24. Field Expedition in Meskhet-Javakheti
26. Field Expedition in Khelvachauri District (Achara)
28. "Have your own style. If you imitate someone else, this is not true singing."  
Interview with Andro Simashvili
32. Georgian Folk Song - New Transcription



This bulletin is published semi-annually in Georgian and English  
through the support of UNESCO

© International Research  
Center for Traditional Polyphony of  
Tbilisi V. Sarajishvili State Conservatoire, 2005.

ISSN 1512 - 2883

Editors:  
Rusudan Tsurtsumia, Tamaz Gabisonia

Translators:  
Maia Kachkachishvili, Clayton Parr

Design:  
Nika Sebiskveradze,  
Giorgi Kokilashvili

Computer services:  
Tamaz Gabisonia  
Kakha Maisuradze

Printed by: Chokhi

The V. Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire, 8, Griboedov Street. Tbilisi 0108 GEORGIA  
Tel. (+99532) 998953 (+99532) 935260 Fax (+99532) 987187  
E mail: [polyphony@polyphony.ge](mailto:polyphony@polyphony.ge), [geomusic@conservatoire.ge](mailto:geomusic@conservatoire.ge), [www.polyphony.ge](http://www.polyphony.ge)



## Safeguarding and Promotion of Georgian Polyphony - Under UNESCO's Patronage

UNESCO has expressed its special attitude to Georgian polyphony many times. In 1977 the information about the Earth and its diverse culture was launched into space including a fragment of the song Chakrulo, one of the most brilliant examples of Georgian polyphony. In 2001 UNESCO proclaimed Georgian polyphonic singing a "Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity". Taking into account that multi-voiced singing and chanting has been the sign of Georgian peoples' national identity and the symbol of their originality throughout their history, it is not surprising that UNESCO's recognition immediately echoed in Georgia. Therefore it is fortunate that the First International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony was held at Tbilisi State Conservatoire in 2002.

Mrs. Noriko Aikawa, Director of the UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Section and Mrs. Anahit Minasyan, Section Coordinator, attended the Symposium. With its scientific sessions and concert programs, the Symposium was a real triumph of Georgian folk singing and chanting that left a lasting impression on its guests. Further on, events developed with lightning speed: Symposium participants recommended the establishment of the International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony, the project was presented to



*Director of IRCTP, Rusudan Tsurtsumia*

UNESCO, and Japanese Funds-in Trust were allocated to finance the UNESCO program "Safeguarding and Promotion of Georgian Traditional Polyphony"...

This is how the three-year project - UNESCO's most high-budget program in Georgia - started in 2003. With this action UNESCO signaled to the Georgian state that Georgian polyphony is a phenomenon which is important worldwide and needs safeguarding, promotion, and deserves support in all its aspects. This was stated in the agreement between the Georgian Government and UNESCO.

The program consists of two parts; part of the money foreseen by the program was given to Tbilisi State Conservatoire's newly established Center for purchasing necessary technical equipment and performing research work; the rest of the money was given out to the International Centre for Georgian Folk Song for financing the functioning of the Youth Folk Song Centers in 7 regions of Georgia, and for holding seminars. Therefore, the program was intended for both the scholarly study of Georgian polyphony and the continuation of live tradition.





*Noriko Aikawa of UNESCO (left) at the First Symposium*

Here is some brief information on what Georgian scholars have done as part of this project.

The program was realized in stages. The money of the first contract, out of the three, was spent on purchasing computers with audio capability, sound recording equipment for field expeditions and various projectors necessary for presentations. With time and practice Georgian ethnomusicologists mastered the use of the equipment, obtained by the support of the Fund "Open Society Georgia" in 1997. The additional devices purchased by UNESCO obliged each employee of the Center to become a qualified user. Now the scholars of Georgian polyphony have no problem with use of digital equipment.

Owing to UNESCO's support, the long-forgotten practice of organizing field expeditions has been revived. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, our ethnomusicologists and their students had no chance to organize field expeditions. But, even in the best conditions for the



*Members of the IRCTP at their meeting*

research work, the folk music scholar feels happy only when he/she has contact with folklore in its original context, in the natural environment. During the past 36 months, ten expeditions have been organized in various parts of Georgia including Svaneti, Kakheti, Guria, Meskheta and Achara.

It should be mentioned that Georgian folk scholars have visited all corners of Georgia - near and remote, but folklore is inexhaustible, since the folkloric process is continuous. Apart from the fact that scholars still manage to find new examples, the best opportunity to observe the dynamics of ethnic life is in the documentation of new interpretations of already known examples.

That is why each field expedition is of great importance for us. Afterwards the expedition material undergoes archiving and computer procession, and is included into the information database. The archive of Tbilisi State Conservatoire contains very rich material of expedition collections recorded on wax cylinders in the 1930s-1940s, which have not been transcribed yet, and those recorded on



magnetic tapes in the 1940s-1980s from various parts of Georgia. Owing to the UNESCO program, Tbilisi State Conservatoire has started issuing of compact disks in the series "From the Archive of the Georgian Folk Music Laboratory". This series will continue until all relevant material preserved in the archive has been released. In the future, perhaps we will publish recordings from remote and recent expeditions in turn. The first compact disk includes the expedition material collected in Kakheti in 1952. This is an academic edition supplied with scientific comments.

One of the most important parts of the Project was the creation of a bilingual (Georgian-English) web site. Would you like to have access to information on Georgian polyphony? Here it is at [www.polyphony.ge](http://www.polyphony.ge) Here you will find various topics on Georgian folk music: general characteristics, dialects, manners of performance, folk groups, Georgian sacred music, the foundation of the Center and information on the Symposia on Traditional Polyphony. Here you can also find the Internet version of the information database for Georgian traditional polyphony - which was one of the main tasks of the UNESCO program. There is another, more complete database, which will gradually be augmented first by examples of Georgian polyphony and that of other peoples of the Caucasus, and in the future will develop into the data base of world polyphony.

Only 5 years ago it was hard to imagine that we would have an opportunity to work on such a project. For the

creation of the data base on Georgian musical folklore, first the concept and then the parameters had been elaborated. For example, we enter Khertlis Naduri and have access to exhaustive information about it: genre, region, type of performers it is intended for, and what is most important, we can even watch video material and listen to the song. Naturally, we have been offered this opportunity only now, and so there are only a few examples with video material.

Every aspect of the activity foreseen in the UNESCO program is vital for future of Georgian polyphony studies. The web site and the information database familiarize the world with Georgian polyphony; the number of people interested in Georgian polyphony i.e. potential learners is increasing. Fortunately, many foreigners, both musicians and amateur, study Georgian singing in Australia, USA, Europe and Asia. Since the interest was great, we decided to publish an English translation of the essays of Georgian thinkers, including the first Georgian musicians and scientists, on melodic and modal/harmonic peculiarities, and polyphonic nature of Georgian folk song. No less noteworthy is the establishment of



*Publications by IRCTP*



the Bulletin of the International Center for Traditional Polyphony. This is a semi-annual publication in Georgian and English. This is the third volume of this edition. We also take care that our publications reach the readers, and we have already received good reviews from abroad. We greatly appreciate the opinions of such world-renowned ethnomusicologists as Professors Dieter Christensen, Timothy Rice, Izaly Zemtsovsky and others.

We are proud of the textbook on Georgian folk musical art. Georgian folklore has been included in the Tbilisi Conservatoire's curriculum almost since its inception. Musical folkloric studies also developed within its walls. The fathers of Georgian ethnomusicology, Dimitri Araqishvili, Grigol Chkhikvadze, Shalva Aslanishvili, Otar Chijavadze, Mindia Zhordania, Kakhi Rosebashvili, Kukuri Chokhonelidze, Edisher Garaqanidze and others taught and researched here. But despite this, preparation and publication of the textbook was always postponed probably due to the complex nature of the task. UNESCO program gave serious moral stimulus to the editorial board of the book to assemble the knowledge accumulated by their predecessors and to put it concisely. The book, which is supplied with audio material and corresponding transcriptions, is intended for performance majors at the Conservatoire.

Translation of the textbook has been realized as part of the same program. This was in response to the requests of foreign specialists and amateurs interested in this field. However, we have had

some difficulties with its publication - the project budget was not sufficient for its completion.

UNESCO's three-year program was a significant support to the Research Center for Traditional Polyphony. This project gave us opportunity to do far more than was possible in the past 18 years under limited funding. One cannot say that the state does not make any efforts; it was owing to the financing from the Georgian government that the First International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony was held in 2002. The Second Symposium in 2004 was organized by the Georgian government together with UNESCO. These symposia have convinced us that worldwide interest towards Georgian folk singing continues undiminished. The responses that we have already received from those willing to participate in the Third Symposium in 2006 testify to this.

The project has significantly assisted Georgian ethnomusicologists to raise the level of scholarly study of traditional polyphony. Now it is up to us to do our best to fulfil the responsibility of safeguarding Georgian vocal polyphony - the masterpiece of the world's intangible cultural heritage - for future generations.

In closing, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to UNESCO and the Japanese Government whose joint efforts enabled us to realize this historical project. It is historical indeed, for it has brought Georgian ethnomusicology out to the international scene.

**Rusudan Tsurtsunia**



## Georgian Traditional Music in 2005

**March** - A folk concert dedicated to the memory of Zurab Zhvania (Georgian Prime Minister, died in February 2005) was held at the Grand Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire. Participating ensembles were Lashari, Mzetamze, Anchiskhati Church Choir, Basiani, Pesvebi, Alilo, Rustavi and Erisoni.

The Ensemble Rustavi held a solo concert at the State Philharmonic Hall in Tbilisi.

**May** - The First Festival of Folk and Sacred Music was held at Batumi Z. Paliashvili State Conservatoire on May 12-13. Among the participants of folk music concerts were Anchiskhati Church Choir, Mzetamze, folk ensemble of the Georgian Patriarchate Basiani, and a women's ensemble of the Georgian Patriarchate Chanting Center, for whom this was the first performance in public.

**June** - The Second International Festival Simghera Samegreloze was held in the town of Khobi on June 17-19.

The National Centre of Georgian Folk Art prepared the Georgian version of its web site - [www.folk.ge](http://www.folk.ge). Exhaustive material has already been collected and posted on the web site according to folk branches. The site is frequently updated and reflects everyday activities (poster, interactive, photo of the week, folk-guest, booking of tickets, etc).



*Ensemble Basiani*

Presentation of the compact disk Berdzenishvilebi, which contains unique recordings of Gurian songs, was held on June 23. The CD was prepared and issued under the project "Gold Fund of the XXI Century".

Together with the insurance company Salby, the Centre realized a joint project under which about fifty people from various branches of folklore, such as song-masters, singers, dancers, choreographers, folk poets, and representatives of fine and applied arts received health insurance policies.

The Ensemble Rustavi toured with concerts in Korea and Japan. On June 27, 2005, they participated in the concert for the 60th anniversary of the United Nations. On September 22, they performed in the closing concert of the Nagoya International Fair together with the Sukhishvilis' Georgian National Ballet.

**July** - the folk ensemble of the Georgian Patriarchate Basiani (director Giorgi Donadze) took part in the Festival Kraina Mriy in Kiev. Basiani also organized a number of master-classes for those interested in Georgian folk song.

**August - On August 20 - September 15** the Ensemble Rustavi held a concert tour in Poland. They performed in Krakow, Warsaw, Wroclaw and other cities. They also took part in Bydgoszcz City Music Festival.

Women's folk ensemble Tutarchela was among the participants of the festival Kolkhoba in the village of Sarpi (Achara). The local audience expressed special excitement and love when hearing Laz songs as performed by Tutarchela.



*Ensemble Tutarchela*



**September** - The St. Trinity Church Choir (director Svimon Jangulashvili) and Basiani gave a concert at the Georgian National Musical Center on September 30. The concert was held as part of the fall festival Shemodgomis Tbilisi, and included both sacred hymns and folk songs.

**From September 2005 until October 2006** the National Exhibition-Festival of Georgian Folklore is being held. This is to search for and exhibit examples of all branches and genres of folklore of all peoples living in Georgia, to reveal the true picture of folklore today, and to document the folkloric heritage of the 20th century. The official opening ceremony of the Exhibition-Festival was held on September 30 in Batumi.

**October** - On October 13 - November 4 the Ensemble Rustavi toured with concerts in 21 cities and towns in The Netherlands.

German filmmaker Ruth Olshan made a documentary entitled "Wie Luft zum Atmen" in 2004. The film deals with Georgian folk culture - traditional songs and dances. Major attention in the film is paid to the ensemble Tutarchela and an artistic portrait of its director Tamar Buadze. The first-night performance of the film was held at the cinema Amirani in Tbilisi.

**On October 14** a solo concert of the Anchiskhati Church Choir was held at the Grand Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire.

**On October 15** a folk concert was organized by the Anchiskhati Church Choir. Among the participants were singers from various regions of Georgia. A women's ensemble of the Chanting Center of the Georgian Patriarchate debuted in this concert.

**On October 17** the concert dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the folk ensemble Tbilisi (director Robert Gogolashvili) was held at Tbilisi State Philharmonic Hall.

**On October 31** and November 1 the Second National Festival of Georgian Chant was held in the town of Sachkhere. The Festival was founded and organized by Sachkhere Cultural Center and the National Centre of Georgian Folk Art.

**In October-November** the Anchiskhati Church Choir toured with concerts in the USA. This was the ensemble's first visit overseas. The



*Anchiskhati Church Choir on tour in America*

host-organization of the tour was "Village Harmony", and one of its organizers Patty Cuyler, with whom the ensemble made friends during the Second International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony in 2004 in Tbilisi. During one month Anchiskhati Church Choir held 24 concerts in 13 states, and also lecture-concerts at Williams University, Indiana University, the Library of Congress, etc. For American students and other interested people the ensemble organized teaching workshops of Georgian folk songs.

The ensemble received invaluable assistance from John Graham. John had lived in Georgia for a year and studied both Georgian chanting and language. In addition to acting as guide and driver for the ensemble, he did an excellent job as concert moderator.

The familiarization of American audiences with Georgian culture also included a slideshow of archival photographs, prepared by the ensemble's friend Luarsab Togonidze.

The presence of Georgian immigrants at Anchiskhati's concerts added strong emotions to the event.

**November - On November 24-26** the Institute of History and Ethnology of the Georgian Academy of Sciences together with the International Center of Christian Studies of the Georgian Patriarchate held the International Symposium "Christianity in Our Life: Past, Present and Future".

About 200 scholars from 40 countries of the world participated in the Symposium. The Chairman was the Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II of





*Conservatory student folk ensemble*

Georgia, co-chairs were Academician Tamaz Gamqrelidze, President of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, and Academician Davit Muskhelishvili, Head of the International Center of Christian Studies.

The Symposium consisted of seven sections. The presenters in the section of musicology were: Magda Sukhiashvili, Tamar Chkheidze, Rusudan Pipia, Nestan Sulava, Ekaterine Oniani, Miranda Todua, Rusudan Tsurtsumia and Nino Maisuradze.

**On November 21 - December 15** the engineer-consultant of Vienna Phonogrammarchiv, Franz Lechleitner, was on a business visit to the International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony at Tbilisi State Conservatoire. With his cylinder player he transferred to digital media about 500 wax cylinders from the collections of Georgian Folk Music Department of Tbilisi State Conservatoire; I. Javakhishvili Institute of History and Ethnology of the Georgian Academy of Sciences; Museum of Cinema, Theatre and Music; State Archive of Georgia; S. Janashia Museum of History and Batumi Museum of Culture and Art.

These wax cylinder recordings were made in the first half of the last century. The earliest was recorded by the Georgian composer Dimitri Araqishvili in the village of Roka (Java District, Kartli) in the 1910s. This cylinder is preserved at Museum of Cinema, Theatre and Music. The wax cylinder collection of this museum also includes composer Shalva Mshvelidze's archive collected in almost all parts of Georgia. The collection of I. Javakhishvili

Institute of History and Ethnology of the Georgian Academy of Sciences includes the field expedition recordings made by professors Shalva Aslanishvili and Tamar Mamaladze in 1946-1952.

The wax cylinder recordings were transferred onto digital media by Archil Kharadze, an employee of the IRCT. This process was supervised by Maia Kachkachishvili, manager of the IRCTP, and employees of Georgian Folk Music Department - Davit Chughliahvili, Tamaz Gabisonia, Malkhaz Erkvanidze, Otari Kapanadze, Ketevan Matiashvili and Nino Nakashidze. They documented all necessary data on each example to the extent possible.

Unfortunately, about 40 cylinders were badly damaged or even broken to pieces, and so it is impossible to listen to their content until they are repaired. According to the annotations enclosed with the cylinders, these contain examples performed by such renowned Georgian singers as the Erkomaishvili brothers, Varlam Simonishvili's choir, etc.

**On 25-27 November** the National Exhibition-Festival was held in Telavi and Gurjaani (Kakheti). The anonymous jury selected the winners of the first round.

**December - On December 12** a memorial plaque to a renowned Georgian song-master and singer Vano Mchedlishvili was opened at 10, Qipiani Street in Tbilisi.

**On December 17,** a Georgian folk music concert from the series of Christmas Concerts was held in the Grand Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire. Among the participants were: folk ensemble of Tbilisi State Medical University Pesvebi, folk ensemble Basiani, folk ensemble of the National Center of Folk Art Lashari, and students folk ensemble of Tbilisi State Conservatoire (director Natalia Zumbadze). This was the debut of the latter on the concert stage.

**On December 25** the presentation of the CD of Tutarchela was held at the Georgian Patriarchate with the blessing of the Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II of Georgia. The CD was issued thanks to the financial support of Patriarch's International Foundation.

**Nino Nakashidze**



## Presentation of the Book "Georgian Folk Music From Avksenti Megrelidze's Archives" and the Debut of the Students' Folk Ensemble

It is of common knowledge that Georgian folk music is an ancient and unique treasury. The proclamation of Georgian polyphonic singing a "Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity" in 2001 by UNESCO made significant changes in the national folk space and placed it in the center of particular interest. The establishment of the International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony in the capital of Georgia greatly contributed to the solution of problems accumulated in this field; expansion of serious research and collection work, publication of transcribed material, participation in various conferences and symposia, issuance of monographs and essays on renowned song-masters, etc. Many important steps have been taken; more is yet to be said and done.

Recently two noteworthy events took place at the Georgian Musical Society on the initiative of Manana Akhmeteli, Chair of the Society: presentation of the Georgian-English volume, which includes the materials from the personal archive of Avksenti Megrelidze, a well-known representative of national musical folklore, and the debut of the students' folk ensemble of Tbilisi State Conservatoire.

Avksenti Megrelidze is known as one of the most prominent in the group of renowned singers at the turn of the 20th century such as



*Presentation of Avksenti Megrelidze's book*

Dzuku Lolua, Samuel Chavleishvili, Sandro Kavsadze, the Erkomaishvili brothers, Varlam Simonishvili, Rema Shelegia, Mikha Jighauri and others. As a young man, Megrelidze, who grew up in the bosom of Gurian song, gained a reputation as a brilliant singer and at the age of twenty he became a precentor of the chanters' choir at the theological seminary. This was the beginning of his artistic life, which lasted for more than 50 years. Megrelidze was an assiduous promoter of Georgian culture, collector of folk songs, teacher, author of theoretical essays, founder of folk choirs and instrumental ensembles, song-master, precentor of church choirs, popularizer of folk instruments and director of various ensembles of chonguri players. Among his innovations were arrangements of folk songs for four-part mixed choirs, introduction of the tradition of mixed choir singing, revival of almost forgotten chonguri and its popularization, combination of choral singing with chonguri ensemble, etc.

All of Megrelidze's *dasi* (ensembles) performed the examples found by him. There are more than 300 examples preserved in his personal archive. These include the song variants recorded from Samuel Chavleishvili, Ivliane Kechaqmadze, Aleksandre Makharadze, the Erkomaishvili brothers, Ermalo Sikharulidze, Melkisedek Nakashidze and others.





*Conservatory student folk ensemble's debut concert*

Megrelidze arranged many folk and town-style melodies and composed songs for the new political formation. The verbal texts of the latter appraised Soviet ideology, but were based on the ancient original mode-harmonious peculiarities and intonational structure.

The collection *Georgian Folk Music From Avksenti Megrelidze's Archives*, which includes the archival material collected and transcribed by Megrelidze, was compiled by musicologist Nato Moistsrapishvili at the International Centre for Georgian Folk Song. All the expenses of the publication were borne by the Centre. Collector and editor of the volume is Nato Zumbadze. Together with traditional songs, presented here are town songs, examples of "new" folklore and folk instrumental melodies. The collection is supplied with notes explaining the histories of the song titles and their creation, the territories from which they come, peculiarities of performance and functions of voices. It also illustrates the characteristic features of transcription and performance in the early 1900s. The historical importance and practical value of the collection is doubtless.

This project has been realized through the efforts of Megrelidze's family members -

his son Avksenti (junior) and daughter-in-law Nato Moistsrapishvili. The support of Anzor Erkomaishvili, outstanding figure of Georgian culture, was no less important, as well as the time and effort of Nato Zumbadze, Lela Makarashvili (computer services) and Mzia Tughushi (translator).

November 11, 2005 was a memorable date for the Tbilisi State Conservatoire student folk ensemble too. This is when the young singers performed in public for the first time. The ensemble was founded eight months ago with the support of the Conservatoire's administration. Only fourteen students, out of many, were selected. These are future conductors, musicologists, pianists, a viola player and an amateur musician. Nato Zumbadze was designated the director. Those who know Nato will agree that she is a tireless servant of folk art. She is a talented, many-sided ethnomusicologist, both a theoretician and practitioner as well as wonderful organizer. Her activities include research, performance, teaching, choir directing and active field-expedition experience. Nato's scientific publications are distinguished in the diversity of themes and interests. She has been a participant of various conferences and international scientific forums. A leading soloist of the women's folk ensemble Mzetamze and one of the music directors of the children's ethnographic studio Amer-Imeri, she has long been considered an authoritative teacher. From the 1980s Amer-Imeri participated in various field expeditions under her direction collecting new variants of the popular folk songs as well as unknown pearls of national treasury.

Many people will agree that folk song is the center of Nato's life. From this standpoint the Conservatoire's administration made a good choice. Nato loves her country and knows that music is the child of human rela-



tions and the means for establishing these relations. This explains her decision to spend her summer vacations with students from her ensemble. She believed that this would help establish mutual rapprochement, reveal the students' performance potential and thus provide better results. In a comparatively short period the young singers learned 16 new songs.

The chief artistic principle for the choir leader is to overcome the difficulties of studying new songs from old recordings, organic closeness to traditions and presenting syncretism - one of folklore's most important characteristic features. It is worth mentioning that each member of the ensemble sings all three parts of all songs, all of them dance and play folk instruments. She strives to make specific categories of national musical thinking come alive in performance.

On their debut, the young ensemble performed songs of various styles and genres with and without chonguri accompaniment. For this purpose 10 interesting examples had been selected from the collection: a cappella songs such as Shobis Alilo, Nina, Manana, Alipasha, and those with instrumental accompaniment such as Iaramashai, Ilias Nana, Simona Dolidze, Shen Chemi Khar Me Sheni, Ekhla Gkhedav Saqvarelo and Baghia Chveni Kveqana. It must be said, that their repertoire is much broader. It includes both well-known and lesser-known variants (mostly field expedition recordings) of almost all dialects - Rachan, Megrelian, Svan, Shavshetian, Acharan, Lechkhumian, Imeretian, Gurian, Tushetian, Mokhebian and Kartli-Kakhetian.

The joint efforts of the students and their teacher were successful. The first meeting of the youngsters with the audience demonstrated that the ensemble has a bright future. Initiatives like this encourage audiences to maintain value on traditional art in the face of contemporary challenges.

**Tamar Meskhi**

## 2005-2006 National Exhibition-Festival of Georgian Folklore

The 2005-2006 national exhibition-festival of Georgian folklore was officially opened on 30 September in Batumi. The organizers of the event were the National Centre of Georgian Folk Art and Georgian Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport.

The participants of the gala concert included authentic groups, secondary folk ensembles (which learned their material from primary folk sources) and individual performers from Khikhadziri, Kharagauli, Ozurgeti, Mestia, Batumi, Tbilisi, Gori and Khashuri.

The National Centre of Georgian Folk Art has prepared regulations especially for the exhibition-festival. These regulations define the aim of the festival, introduce conditions of preparation and holding of the festival, as well as those for jury membership and rewarding, list the performance criteria and discuss the possible results and importance of the festival.

Coordinating committees have been created in various regions and districts. They are entrusted to prepare and hold the exhibition-festival in their area. For this they must carry out preliminary registration of participants, fill in questionnaires prepared by the National Centre of Georgian Folk Art and create the festival's information database.



*At the Folk Exhibition Festival*



Exhibition-Festivals have had a long history in Georgia. However, a number of changes made in the regulations of the National Centre of Georgian Folk Art significantly distinguish these festivals from their predecessors. These innovations are intended for the preservation of traditional culture and must be welcomed and encouraged. For instance, the participants must preserve the purity of folklore, they must search for and revive the traditions of their region, preserve the manner of folk performance, use traditional musical instruments, and present examples from all genres. The jury remains anonymous until the closing of the festival. It will make final decisions after having discussed the video, photo and audio recordings of each of the festival sections in Tbilisi. In order to provide better creative activities, the jury prepares an individual packet of remarks and suggestions for each participant of the festival.

The National Centre of Georgian Folk Art intends to issue CDs, DVDs and informational booklets of the best participants of the exhibition-festival. The Centre will petition local boards of administration as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to provide better artistic conditions for them. The Centre plans to organize master-classes as part of the festival.

Realization of the above-mentioned innovations will definitely create better conditions for traditional folklore. After all, this is the Centre's aim.

**Natalia Zumbadze**



*At the Folk Exhibition Festival*

## The 80th Anniversary of the Song and Dance Ensemble *Sinatle*

The concert dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the Song and Dance Ensemble Sinatle of Tbilisi Municipal Transport Service was held on 24 October, 2005, at Akaki Khorava House of Actors. The participants of the concert included the Sukhishvili Choreographic Studio, ensemble Imedi, Erisioni vocal studio, ensemble Tbilisi, trio Megobroba, as well as singers Otar Berdzenishvili, Giorgi Ushikishvili and Enriko Janelidze, several journalists, choreographers, singers and musicians.

Some of the concert items, presented by folk groups, were announced incorrectly; for example an Ossetian dance was announced as Georgian. Some pieces were far from folk tradition: one of the dances was accompanied by guitar and other musical instruments atypical of Georgians. In one of the choreographic compositions Megrelian folk songs were performed with modernized accompaniment.

One doesn't have to be a choreographer to see how Georgian choreography has been distanced from its primary folk source. I would say that vocal ensembles are more concerned with preservation of traditional dances; they do their best to perform dances from various parts of Georgia naturally, without decoration. In the dances staged by choreographers traditional elements are rejected as too simple, primitive. But these are the chief virtues of any folk dance, including Georgian! From this standpoint, the remark made by Giorgi Ushikishvili, Director of the National Centre of Georgian Folk Art was proper in saying that "this road will lead to losing folklore in nearest 4-5 years."



It is regrettable that audiences enjoy this type of choreographic compositions. Recent concerts convinced me that the audience expresses particular sympathy towards these pieces. This is indicative of the degradation of our taste and loss of traditions. Even more sorrowful is when a professional choreographer or musician, who should be more cultivated, extols the tasteless dances of unknown origin. Due to this kind of "professionals", folklore is under the threat of mutilation!

Apparently, the degradation of Georgian audiences' taste is a theme for serious discussion. Had professionals declared their opinions impartially and at the proper time, wrong norms of performance wouldn't have been inculcated on the Georgian stage. But this did not happen! Hence it is not surprising that the novice audience shows preference for concert pieces like *Shalakho* and rises in applause. *Sinatle*, the hero of the evening, performed the majority of the songs. Its repertoire included the examples of both authentic village folklore from Kartli, Kakheti, Svaneti and Samegrelo, and professional music. I must add, that the basic artistic principles of the ensemble (large number of performers, duplication of upper voices, conducting, etc.) is more characteristic of professional choral performance.

Other vocal groups and performers specially united for this event presented *Gurian*, *Acharan*, *Megrelian*, town and professional songs. The participating ensembles differed from each other and reflected notable tendencies

in Georgian folk performance of recent years; some of them were much closer to folk origins, others were not. For instance, more than one instrument of the same kind is never used as an accompaniment of a song in folk tradition. This is impossible! If the song is accompanied by instruments, these must be of different kinds, as a rule. Such mistakes presented on the stage by folk groups, and left without comment of professionals, encourage others to repeat them.

The speakers noted *Sinatle's* contribution to Georgian culture; they recalled its artistic route. We consider it interesting for our readers to remember the important moments in the ensemble's biography.

A folk choir of ten people (which later became song and dance ensemble *Sinatle* of Tbilisi Transport Administration) was established in 1924 by Mitropane Tsaguria. The first members of the choir were tram drivers and conductors. After having obtained traditional costumes and folk instruments, and having added two more members and prepared a program, the ensemble started performing concerts in the depot and its neighborhood.

In the 1930s the ensemble was directed by Mikheil Kavsadze, a famous song-master and singer, and attracted the attention of audiences and renowned specialists including Dimitri Araqishvili, who personally supervised the perfection of the ensemble's repertoire.



*First choir of tram depot workers  
in 1924*



*Ensemble Sinatle at the National Folk  
Competition in 1951*



The active artistic life of the ensemble was hampered by World War II. After the war the ensemble held auditions and in a year's time the group of ten people turned into a large song and dance troupe including 90 singers and 30 dancers. In 1950-1951 Sinatle brilliantly performed at the All-Union Competitions of Amateur Talents in Georgia and Moscow. The 1950s were fairly fruitful in the ensemble's biography; this is when its triumphant tours in the Soviet Union and abroad started. At the same time the best soloists of the ensemble created a vocal quartet, which had a profound impact on the history of Georgian variety art. The quartet recorded soundtracks for a number of theatre performances and films, and delivered hundreds of charity concerts in factories and plants.

In the 1960s Sinatle was at the height of its fame. It was the first in Georgia to be awarded the title People's Ensemble.

In 1968, on Moscow's instructions, Sinatle performed concerts in Prague during the Prague Spring of unrest in Czechoslovakia. Under these conditions, the ensemble's highly professional art represented the human face of the Soviet Union and was given a warm ovation by the audiences.

Sinatle made great contribution to the popularization of national folklore. It concentrated in East Germany, Denmark, Finland, Austria, Yugoslavia, Poland, Bulgaria and Mongolia. A film entitled "Sinatle Sings and Dances" was made

In the 1980s, during the period of perestroika, Sinatle remained loyal to its art. Today, the 80-year-old ensemble is still at work. Owing to the efforts of many people, including transport administrators of various times and generations, Sinatle has been maintained.

**Natalia Zumbadze**

## *Ethnomusicology*

# **Distribution of Vocal Polyphony among the World's Musical Cultures**

**Joseph Jordania**

**The University of Melbourne,  
Australia**

This article is designed to give a reader general picture of the distribution of vocal polyphony in different regions of the world. Due to the large number of polyphonic cultures the reader will not find the specific details of different local polyphonic traditions here.

Before the actual information about the distribution of vocal polyphonic cultures it is appropriate to discuss few important points.

**"What is polyphony, or how should we define it?"**

Polyphony is usually defined as a type of a music, where there is more than one pitch heard at the same time. Generally agreeing with this definition of polyphony, I believe this definition is one-sided and does not take into account a very important social aspect of vocal polyphony. I believe we must distinguish two equally important components of traditional vocal polyphony: social and musical. Socially polyphony implies active musical interaction within the group of the people. Musically polyphony implies having more than one pitch during the performance. It is clear that traditional definition of the polyphony is based on musical component only and does not take social component into account.





*Joseph Jordania*

Social and musical aspects of polyphony do not always go together in various cultures. For example, the phenomenon of unison (/octave) singing socially represents polyphony (as group singing), although musically it is a monophony (only one pitch). On the other hand the unique overtone singing of some Central Asian cultures musically represents polyphony although socially it is not polyphony.

Social polyphony is distributed extremely wide across the world musical cultures. Most of so-called "monophonic cultures" (such as Chinese, Australian Aboriginal, or most of American Indian music cultures) have traditional forms of social polyphony (group singing). Arguably, there is no culture without some traditional forms of group singing. One of the true universals of human musical cultures - the antiphonal dialog between two parties (between soloists, two groups, and particularly between soloist and a group) represents the most basic and widespread form of social polyphony.

Our review mostly represents cultures where vocal polyphony is represented by both - social and musical - components. Regions where multi-part singing is represented by musi-

cal component only (without social component) are marked as having "elements" of vocal polyphony. Cultures with social polyphony only (unison or octave singing) are not discussed in this article, but readers should remember that there is hardly a culture without social polyphony.

**"Where should we put the "dividing line" between multi-part (or polyphonic) and one-part (or monophonic) singing?"**

According to my attitude towards the definition of polyphonic singing, there is no clear borderline between polyphony and monophony. Strictly speaking, I do not believe there is any purely monophonic culture in the world, the one without any elements of social/or musical polyphony.

Both social and musical aspects of polyphony should be present in a tradition to qualify as polyphonic. Cultures with a tradition of group unison singing (without multi-part singing) are in the group of cultures with social polyphony only. This is a huge group of cultures comprising about the half of the world musical cultures. These cultures (without musical aspect of polyphony) in my classification represent the group of cultures traditionally known as monophonic cultures. Tradition of overtone singing, on the other hand, represents the tradition where musical aspect of polyphony is present, although the social aspect is not. Some singing styles (particularly unison-heterophonic singing) are in a position of a "transitional phenomenon" between polyphonic and monophonic singing styles.

**"Is there such a thing as "polyphonic musical culture" and "monophonic musical culture"?"**

Despite my own belief that there is no strict division between polyphonic and mono-



phonic singing traditions, and that there are no purely monophonic cultures in the world, some cultures could be viewed as "polyphonic" and some as "Monophonic". Being polyphonic or monophonic is one of the most important and basic characteristic features for most of musical cultures. For the representatives of so-called "polyphonic cultures" (where both - social and musical components of polyphony are widely represented) it is quite usual to view even one-part melodies as a part of multi-part texture, or to sing an accompanying part to the unfamiliar melodies from their own or other cultures. For polyphonic cultures co-sounding of different parts is often more important than the melodic development of each part. Musical texture is often based on repetitive short melodic phrases, and songs may not be based around the 'main melody of a song'. From the social point of view during the process of the performance society usually is not divided into "performers" and "listeners", as in polyphonic cultures all the members of the society are usually performers and listeners at the same time.

On the other hand, in so-called "monophonic cultures" linear development is paramount and songs usually have well defined and complex melodic structure. The role of the individual performer is crucial. The importance of individual performer in monophonic cultures leads to the professionalisation of musical culture. The role of musical instruments (particularly string instruments) is much more important in monophonic cultures, and the instruments are often technically more elaborated than in polyphonic cultures. Professionalisation of individual performers in monophonic cultures often leads to the creation of complex theoretical systems of scales and modes. Unlike

the polyphonic cultures where the process of the performance often does not divide the society on "performers" and "listeners", in most of the monophonic cultures the roles of a "performer/performers" and "listeners" are clearly defined.

We should also remember that musical culture of some countries consists of both - polyphonic and monophonic types of traditional music, and the singing practices of certain region/regions of a country could be very different from the singing practices of the other regions of the same country.

### **"What is the relationship between vocal and instrumental forms of polyphony?"**

There is no doubt that there is an intrinsic intimate relationship between vocal and instrumental forms of polyphony (and generally music) in any given culture. At the same time this relationship is often more subtle and does not necessarily mean that instrumental and vocal music will have the same forms of monophony or polyphony. For example, some of the Central Asian countries combine vocal monophony with quite developed instrumental polyphony. Generally speaking, instrumental polyphony is geographically spread much wider than vocal polyphony. Cultures with the vocal forms of polyphony usually have instrumental polyphony as well, but at least some cultures with monophonic singing traditions have instrumental polyphony.

One of the most interesting aspects of relationship between vocal and instrumental forms of music is that different types of traditional instruments within cultures show different links with their own vocal music. Blown instruments seems to have much more intimate relationship with the vocal tradition rather than string instruments (this could be the result of



breathing - common feature for both singing and playing on blown instruments). This general closeness of the vocal music with the blown instrumental music allows us (to some extent) to reconstruct the presence of vocal forms of polyphony in some ancient civilizations where polyphonic blown instruments (e.g., double polyphonic flutes) were widely spread.

**"What are the origins of vocal polyphony - did it come from the further development of the initial one-part singing tradition?"**

Strictly speaking, this question has nothing to do with the actual distribution of vocal polyphony in different cultures. At the same time this important question often affects the way we are looking at the historical dynamics of the distribution of vocal forms of polyphony in different regions of the world. The initial common belief of musicologists and ethnomusicologists that polyphony came as a late (and natural) development of the initial monophonic singing tradition is outdated. Numerous examples of wonderfully developed vocal polyphony from the most remote and economically undeveloped regions of the world suggest that polyphony could be extremely ancient integral part of human musical culture. During the last 20 years in my publications I argued that the origins of human group singing and vocal polyphony goes back to the beginnings of the evolution of hominids. According to this model, there are close historical links between the origins of human part-singing and the evolution of human intelligence, language and speech.

Before we start discussing distribution of vocal polyphony in different regions of the world we should note, that polyphony is truly a world phenomenon, and it is spread (in dif-

ferent forms and different quantities) on every continent of our planet. Primarily because of such a wide distribution and complexity and diversity of styles, the detailed map of polyphony is as difficult to create, as the detailed map of the entire world musical styles. Our article, as it mentioned before, does not go into the details and does not (and can not) represent the whole richness of the world of polyphony.

Secondly, this article discusses vocal forms of polyphony only. We will be mentioning instrumental polyphony only in the context of its links with the vocal forms of polyphony. And finally, we should remember that our article represents not the distribution of polyphonic singing among the contemporary populations, but rather the distribution of polyphony among the ideally represented "indigenous" populations of the world. For example, discussing American continents we will mostly concentrate on distribution of polyphonic singing among different American Indian tribes of the North and South America. Distribution of polyphonic styles in relatively new European, African and other populations of Americas will be briefly mentioned. I will also try (wherever this is possible) to convey the information about the distribution of polyphonic singing in earlier epochs. We have such a possibility because of the richness of literary and archaeological evidence from some regions (such as North Europe, North Africa, West Asia and Central America).

My comments will follow the continents and the large sections of the continents, generally accepted in contemporary regional studies in different disciplines. We will start with Africa, followed by Europe, Asia, Americas, Australia and Oceania.

**(to be continued in the next issue)**



*Georgian Ethnomusicologists*

## **Grigol Chkhikvadze** **(1900-1987)**

Professor Grigol Chkhikvadze is considered to be a father of Georgian ethnomusicology. Throughout his long and multi-faceted career he was a champion of traditional musical culture.

Grigol Chkhikvadze was born to the family of Zakaria Chkhikvadze, a renowned musician. As a young boy, he learned folk melodies and spent all his life in an environment saturated with native music.

During his early years at the Georgian Gymnasium, he studied violin with Andria Qarashvili, the first Georgian virtuoso violinist. He played in the orchestra and sang in the choir under the direction of Zakaria Paliaishvili's students, and performed violin recitals with the accompaniment of the great composer himself.

He completed his studies in theory-composition at the Tbilisi Conservatoire in 1924. During this time, together with Mikheil Kherkheulidze, he founded a children's theatre company and choirs in Tbilisi, and organized charity concerts in the villages of Eniseli, Iqalto and Shovi.

After undertaking further study in music theory with Khristofor Kushnarev at Leningrad Conservatoire, Chkhikvadze completed a post-graduate course in musical folkloric studies at the Institute of Anthropology and Ethnography in 1935.

On returning to Georgia, Chkhikvadze dedicated the next fifty years to the study of musical folklore, including teaching and research. His whole life is an example of rendering tribute to national culture. He thrived on folk music and his love towards it. All his works, articles, lectures, discussions and will were devoted to it.

Chkhikvadze's first teaching experience was at the School for the Blind and School No



1 in 1919. From 1935 on, till his death, he worked at Tbilisi State Conservatoire. Here he introduced special and general courses in Georgian musical folklore; from 1970 to 1977 he headed the Georgian Folk Music Department, which was founded at his initiative, and he taught the course in History of Georgian Music, which he assembled together with Professor Lado Donadze. He familiarized the students at Baku Conservatoire with the history of Georgian music and Georgian traditional folklore. He was head of the Department of Musical Folklore at the Georgian Radio.

On Chkhikvadze's initiative and the support of academicians Niko Ketskhoveri and Simon Janashia, the department of Georgian musical folklore was founded at the Georgian Academy of Sciences. This department was first led by the outstanding Georgian scholar Shalva Aslanishvili; Chkhikvadze was appointed director in 1953 and served in this role until 1960. At the same time he collaborated with Shota Rustaveli Dramatic Institute, was an artistic director of the Song and Dance State Ensemble, member of musical-choreographic and historical-ethnographic societies of the Georgian Composers' Union, and served as member of various scientific and artistic councils.



As a teacher, Chkhikvadze combined self-discipline with a great sense of responsibility. He showed fatherly concern for his students and created an atmosphere of spiritual connection with them. Modest, wise, a prudent adviser of youth, he was a strict and exacting teacher, a brilliant speaker, often witty, sometimes hot-tempered, but always exclusively restrained - this is how his memory is enshrined in his students' hearts.

The years did not harm Chkhikvadze's energy and cheerfulness. At lectures or individual lessons he always directed his students' ability toward learning scientific fundamentals, broadening their professional horizons, and mastering modern achievements in folkloric studies. During field expeditions, he not only persevered under uncomfortable conditions, but was highly competitive with his students in hiking along mountain paths.

Chkhikvadze started his field collection with the songs of his own aunts, wonderful singers and guitar-players, in 1917-1918. His first expedition was in Guria and was organized by the Institute of Anthropology and Ethnography. He aimed at searching for and documenting the pearls of centuries-old Georgian musical treasury scattered among the population.

His work as a collector of folk music was fruitful. He recorded very interesting examples of one-, two-, three- and four-voiced songs of various dialects (East-Georgian mountains, Kartli-Kakhetian, Laz, Meskhetian, etc.) and genres (work, historical, ritual, travelers', warriors', round-dance, love, lyrical, etc.) in Eastern and Western Georgia. The collection "Georgian Folk Song," prepared and edited by Chkhikvadze, and supplied with his bilingual (Georgian-Russian) review, warrants special mention. Here the author discusses the peculiarities and characteristic features of Georgian folk musical art. Presented here are examples from all over Georgia; the majority of the material, recorded by Andria Qarashvili, Ia Kargareti, Zakaria Chkhikvadze, Dimitri Araqishvili, Zakaria

Paliashvili and Shalva Mshvelidze, had already been published, but 46 songs recorded by Chkhikvadze himself appeared here in print for the first time. Each chapter of the book includes a separate section on instrumental music.

Chkhikvadze's first concise work on the origins of Georgian folk music is "Georgian Musical Culture from Ancient Times to 19th century," which he presented in Leningrad in 1947. For this work he was awarded the academic degree of Doctor of Arts without defending the thesis. In his subsequent academic works, he clearly and boldly portrayed the peculiar features of Georgian song.

Among the most important topics of Chkhikvadze's investigation is multi-voiced singing, one of the crucial questions in Georgian ethnomusicology. Through serious analysis of original examples, collected at various times and in various parts of Georgia, he classified and illustrated diverse forms of Georgian multi-voiced musical thinking, their structural peculiarities, and discussed examples of pagan music, where pre-Christian beliefs and their syncretic nature are reflected.

Proper attention should be paid to Chkhikvadze's studies on Georgian folk musical instruments. He regarded folk instruments as a significant source for the history of Georgian music. Through study of materials from archaeological excavations (e.g. the bronze statue from Qazbegi, a bone flute from Samtavro, and musical instruments carved on Hittite bas-reliefs) together with written sources, he determined the Georgian instrumentarium of pagan times.

Chkhikvadze was a reviewer of many dissertations in Tbilisi, Baku, Yerevan, Moscow, Leningrad and Riga. At various times he was chairman of the Aesthetic Section of Pedagogical Society, Art Section of Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia, Section of Ancient Musical Culture and Musical Folklore, head of the Georgian Society on International Cultural Relations, member of the Scientific Council at the Institute of History of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, among others.



The renowned scholar had close creative contacts with colleagues from the USA, Great Britain, France, Sweden, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Russia, Ukraine and other countries.

Time is an infallible and strict judge; it never grants anything undeservedly. Grigol Chkhikvadze's name has stood the test of time. The blessed efforts of the founding father of Georgian folk music studies has been appraised at its true worth, and can be seen in the professional enthusiasm and scientific achievements of his successors. Continuing his legacy, today the Georgian Folk Music Department is an active participant of international symposia and conferences on traditional musical folklore.

**Tamar Meskhi**

### **List of Grigol Chkhikvadze 's scientific works:**

- Kartveli Khalkhis Udzvelesi Samusiko Kultura (Ancient Musical Culture of the Georgian People) (1948). Tbilisi: Sakartvelos SSR Musikaluri Pondi (in Georgian)
- Musikaluri Sakravi - Ebani da Misi Raoba (Musical Instrument - Ebani and Its Essence) (1955). In Masalebi Sakartvelos Etnografiatsvis (Materials on Georgian Ethnography), VIII. Tbilisi: Sakartvelos Metsnierebata Akademiis Gamomtsemloba (in Georgian)
- Kartuli Khalkhuri Simghera da Shemkreblobiti Mushaoba (Georgian Folk Song and Compilation Activity). In Amierkavkasiis Respublikebis Musmtsodneoba da Musikaluri Kritika (Musicology and Musical Criticism of the Trans-Caucasian Republics). Moscow: (in Russian)
- Gruzinskie Narodnie Pesni (Georgian Folk Songs) (1956). Chkhikvadze Grigori (Documentation, Editing, Introduction and Comments). Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Muzikalnoe Izdatelstvo (in Russian)
- Sakartvelos SSR Kompozitorebi (Composers of the Georgian SSR) (1956). Tbilisi: Khelovneba (in Georgian)
- Drevnegruzinskaya Muzikalnaya Kultura (Ancient Georgian Musical Culture) (1957). In Gruzinskaya Muzikalnaya Kultura (Georgian Musical Culture). Tsulukidze, Anton (Editor in Chief), pp. 7-20. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Muzikalnoe Izdatelstvo (in Russian)
- Kartuli Khalkhuri Simghera (Georgian Folk Song) (1960). Chkhikvadze, Grigol (Editor and compiler), Vol. I. Tbilisi: Sabchota Sakartvelo (in Georgian and Russian)
- Kartuli Samusiko Sakravebi. Chasaberi (Georgian Musical / Wind/ Instruments) (1962-1963). The manuscript is preserved at the Georgian Folk Music Department of Tbilisi State Conservatoire (in Georgian)
- Osnovnie Tipi Gruzinskogo Narodnogo Mnogogolosia (The Basic Types of Georgian Folk Multi-Voiced Singing) (1964). Moscow: Nauka (VII International Congress of Anthropology and Ethnography) (in Russian and English)
- Doistoricheskaya Gruzinskaya Kostianaya Salamuri-Fleita (The Pre-Historic Georgian Bone Salamuri-Flute) (1965). Separatum. Budapest. Akademiai Kiado / Europa et Hungaria. Congressus Ethnographikus in Hungaria. Budapest. 16-20 October, 1963 (in Russian)
- Kartuli Khalkhuri Otkhkhmianoba (Georgian Folk Four-Voiced Singing) (1965-1967)
- The manuscript is preserved at the Georgian Folk Music Department of Tbilisi State Conservatoire (in Georgian)
- Musikis Elementaruli Teoria (The Elementary / Simple Theory of Music) (1966). Tbilisi: Ganatleba (in Georgian)
- Grundtypen der Mehrstimmigkeit im gruzinischen Volkslied (1968). Sonderdruck aus: Beitrage zur Musikwissenschaft. Heft 3. Berlin (in German)
- La cultur musicale populaire georgienne (1969). Bedi Kartlisa. Revue de kartvelologie. P. Paris, Vol. XXVI (in French)
- Musikaluri Leksikoni (Musical Dictionary) (1971). Qipshidze, Alisa and Chkhikvadze Grigol (compilers). Tbilisi: Ganatleba (in Georgian, Russian and English)
- Gruzinski Narodni Pisni. Pisennik (Georgian Folk Songs. Collection of Songs) (1977). Kiev (in Ukrainian)
- Lazeti da Tanamedrove Lazuri Simghera (Lazeti and Modern Laz Song) (1980). The manuscript is preserved at the Georgian Folk Music Department of Tbilisi State Conservatoire (in Georgian)
- Numerous publications in various magazines, newspapers, articles in Georgian Encyclopedia, compositions including children's operas, songs, romances, etc.



## Field Expedition in Sagarejo District (Kakheti)

Under a UNESCO program, the International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony carried out a field expedition in Sagarejo district on August 17-30, 2005. The participants were Nino Makharadze and Lela Makarashvili, faculty at the Conservatoire's Georgian Folk Music Department.

The majority of the material recorded on this expedition includes instrumental pieces played on panduri in the style of East Georgian mountain repertoire (such as Stirian Tushis Kalebi, Mtashi Salamurs Vakvneseb, Vazhkatso Mtashi Gazrdilo, Shirakshi Ertma Metskhvarem, Shatilis Asulo, etc.), variants of Kakhetian shairebi (humorous songs), dance melodies (Kakhuri, Lekuri and Osuri) and popular Acharan melodies.

Verbal material, collected together with folk examples, testify that the traditional rituals are performed here in the same way as elsewhere in Kakheti. These rituals include those for healing children's acute contagious diseases (such as mumps, measles, scarlet fever, chicken pox, whooping cough, etc), other rituals including Eliaoba, Alilo, Dideba, Berikaoba, and the weather ritual of plowing water with a plow.

In the village of Tokhliauri we recorded lamentation with verbal text during a funeral. We collected the examples of song and instrumental music, description of various rituals, information on farming activities from senior citizens Nikoloz Kupatadze, Tamar Mekaluashvili, Aleksii Matiashvili and Zhuzhuna Shioshvili. Lamzira Zakaidze, the director of the local house of culture, leads a women's ensemble and makes every effort to encourage youngsters to sing. Her group sang a few songs for us, including town songs with guitar accompaniment.

We recorded a few songs with panduri accompaniment from Neli Bugechashvili, whose family is originally from Pshavi. She also told



*Shalva Akhverdashvili from Ninotsminda*

us about the religious holiday Lasharis Mtavarangelozobis Khatoba and about some wedding rituals in Ukana Pshavi. We filmed children's games in the same village.

Our meeting with an elderly couple Tamar Natsvlashvili, born in 1926, and Nikoloz Tatarashvili, born in 1925, was unforgettable. The husband and wife have restored the local church with their own means, and are taking care of it. From them we recorded blessings, toasts, salamuri tunes, dance melodies and an lavnana melody played on panduri.

We learned, that on the 3rd and 4th Sundays after Easter, the festival of Kalobnoba is held at the St. George and Virgin Mary churches near the village of Tokhliauri. Many people come here from the neighbouring villages too. The banquets on these days are accompanied by wrestling, horse racing, dancing and various games. The villagers have their summer pastures on the Mount Tsivi. According to Nikoloz Kupatadze local shepherds still make their salamuri from the black elder tree. Sadly, on this visit we did not meet any of the shepherds.

We also visited the villages of Ninotsminda, Giorgisminda, Manavi, Kakabeti and Udabno.

Thanks to Maia Aleksishvili, director of the Ninotsminda house of culture, we managed to meet local panduri players Vasil Rochikashvili and Shalva Akhverdashvili. They gladly accepted our request and played humorous songs and dance melodies for us. Kalia Rostomashvili, famous local singer, agreed





*Vassil Rochikashvili from Ninotsminda*

only to tell incantations, as she was in deep mourning. In the hospitable family of Nadia Ivaniashvili, we recorded the song-lamentation sung by Eliko Gogaladze-Rostomashvili, born in 1941. The song is dedicated to the soldiers who fought and died in Abkhazia.

In the village of Kakabeti we met Ushangi Masurashvili (78) and Mikheil Galustovi (76). These elderly people used to sing in the well-known choirs of Mikha Jighauri and Vano Mchedlishvili. Together with well-known songs, such as Berikatsi Var, Tsintsqaro, Chonguro, Orovela, Iavnana, Herio and Garekakhuri Sachidao, we recorded fragments of Kakaburi Mushuri and Alilo, dance melodies, humorous songs, Soviet and town songs performed by them. At the initiative of Niko Gigoshvili, director of the local house of culture Ushangi, who is a chonguri master too, teaches traditional folk songs to his grandchildren and other young people. Niko has a small collection of musical instruments and a very interesting photo, audio and video archive. Dariko Mirziashvili, a wonderful panduri player, directs children's and women's ensembles in the village.

The festival of Berikaoba is held annually in the village of Chailuri. We think that this event should be filmed soon. For the next expedition we are planning to visit elderly singers and poetic storytellers, settlers from Pshavi, in the village of Kochbani.

Kako Peikrishvili from the village of Manavi is a member of the local instrumental ensemble which is often invited to weddings and funerals. He plays several instruments such as panduri, doli and duduki. We recorded songs

with panduri accompaniment from him including Shakara; variants of this song were very popular in many villages of this district and were documented by Joseph Jordania's expedition in 1980.

In Manavi we also recorded Nadia Machuridze and Aniko Ekvtimishvili. The two ladies told us about the rules for the ritual of Eliaoba, sang the two-voiced variant of the healing song Iavnana and songs with panduri accompaniment. Ruizan Sonashvili, who is originally from Saingilo (formerly in Georgia, now Kakhi district of Azerbaijan) and is married to a local man, sang Ingiloian lullaby Dai Dai.

We think special attention should be paid to the folk traditions of the village of Udabno. This village was founded in 1984 and is inhabited by the families of migrants from various parts of Georgia including Svans, Rachans, Megrelians, Meskhetians, Ingiloians, etc. During this expedition we visited families from the village of Latali in Svaneti, and recorded Zari, Tsmindao Ghmerto, Jgriagish, Barbal Dolash (a variant from the village of Becho), Irinola-Marinola and Vitsbil-Matsbil as sung by Otar Parjiani, Gunter Pitskhelani, Mirza Ivechiani, Petre Nansqani and Rostom Girgvliani.

The families from Svaneti keep strong links with their home region high in the mountains. They always participate in all summer festivals in Svaneti and do their best to maintain their ancient traditions in Udabno. They are often asked to sing Zari at the funerals regardless the original district of the mourning family. The future changes going on in their musical folklore should be observed.

On 28 August, on Mariamoba (St. Mary's Day) we attended the church service at Dodo Garejeli church in Sagarejo, and had very interesting conversation with chanters at Dormition of Mary church.

We took a number of photos of panduris (mostly called chonguri by the locals) made of various materials such as acacia, mulberry and pear wood.

We would like to thank Tinatin Mezvrishvili, director of Sagarejo House of Culture, and all those who assisted and supported us in our work.

**Nino Kalandadze-Makharadze**



## Field Expeditions

### Field Expedition in Meskhet-Javakheti

A field expedition to the town of Akhaltsikhe and three villages in Meskhet-Javakheti was organized on 16-30 July, 2005, as part of the UNESCO program. The expedition included Tinatin Zhvania and Ketevan Matiashvili from the IRCTP, and Conservatoire students Nana Gogoladze, Baia Zhuzhunadze and Nino Naneishvili.

There had been no musical examples from Meskhet-Javakheti among the expedition recordings preserved at Georgian Folk Music Department. The material recorded in this province of Georgia by Shalva Mshvelidze's expedition in the early 1930s, which has recently been transferred to digital media under the IRCTP project, will significantly enrich our knowledge of the musical folklore of this region. No less valuable is the material obtained by our expedition - 9 mini disks (150 minutes each) and 1056 photos.

Mshvelidze's expedition was the first to Meskhet-Javakheti; the second expedition was led by Grigol Chkhikvadze in 1949. The intensive expeditional work performed by composer Valerian Maghradze is also noteworthy.

For better understanding the musical and ethnical picture of this part of Georgia, we find it appropriate to say few words about some facts from the past.

Historically the territory of Meskhet-Javakheti was the South-West part of the Kingdom of Iberia. It was an inseparable part of the province of Kartli. Its population were ethnic Georgians; they spoke Georgian language and did not differ from the population of Shida Kartli and Kvemo Kartli in their anthropological type, everyday life and traditions.

Political, social, religious and ethnic upheavals have changed this region much since the 13th century. After Turkish and Persian invasions the process of conversion of local Christian-Orthodox population into Islam accelerated. This resulted in mass exodus of native population from here to other parts of the country. At this time Turk-Selchuks and Armenians started to take up their residence on Georgian lands. In time the congregations of Catholic and Armenian-Gregorian churches started to enlarge at the expense of the locals. Nevertheless, a small part of the Georgian population managed to maintain their links with Orthodox traditions.

At the beginning of the 19th century 100,000 Armenian refugees were resettled from Erzerum; they were followed by Kurds, Greeks, Dukhobors, etc.



*Mito Taturashvili and Vazha Khutsishvili  
from Khizabavra*



*Nina Okromelidze from Muskhi*



In 1944 Turkish-speaking population, the so-called "Turkish Meskhetians", was exiled from Meskhet-Javakheti. From this time on, Georgians from various parts of the country (Imereti, Achara, Svaneti, etc.) moved here and found their home.

In 1960 Grigol Chkhikvadze wrote: "Both expeditions (Mshvelidze's in the early 1930s and Chkhikvadze's in 1949) carried out very fruitful work. They did not collect much, but what they did, was truly precious. The character and content of the collected material, though poor, makes us believe that more careful study will allow us to find significant examples that are linked to the centuries-old life of our people . . . " (G. Chkhikvadze, "Georgian Folk Song", 1960, pp. 21-22).

The same can be said today. Based on the information, obtained from 46 ethnic sources, it can be concluded that true Meskhetian folk art has barely survived. Instead, you can often hear both young and elderly people sing the town songs from East Georgian town folklore such as Saiatnouri, Baiati, Ietim Gurji and others.

In Akhaltsikhe we met the leading expert on Meskhetian musical traditions, now deceased, Shota Altunashvili. He taught many already forgotten Meskhetian songs to many people. The repertoire of his ensemble Meskheti included many Meskhetian songs arranged for three voices. As Altunashvili told us, people had sung those songs in one voice. Among the one-voiced examples we recorded from him were Otkhi Tsqaro Sdis, Mravalzhamier, Gegutisa Mindorzedi, Vardzioba-Dziobasa, etc.

We sorted out the expedition material according to the parameters characteristic solely for this region. One of these is collection of all type of information connected with the tradition of multi-voiced singing, which is considered to be lost in Meskhetian life. The most noteworthy statements connected with this are mostly about the function of bass voice part, such as Banze Adevneba (i.e. tuning low voice to the melody, etc).

When talking about the ensemble of instruments popular in Meskhet-Javakheti in the past, Zurab Ivanidze (81) from the village

of Atsqvita said that the instrument chichila (also called mei) was used for bass, or when 3-4 tulumis - Meskhetian name for gudastviri (bagpipe) - were played together, one of them would be in the function of low voice.

The most important findings of the expedition are the examples, once very characteristic for local musical life, such as Orovela that we recorded from Giorgi Jinchveladze (97) in the village of Muskhi. It should be mentioned that this song is similar to Kartli-Kakhetian songs with the same name in its mode-intonation and composition.

As for the other, it is once very popular dance performed with dancing and singing with glossolalias Dam Dalili Dillilo . . . We must say that like Orovela, this song is also fairly close to Kartli-Kakhetian dance melodies. We recorded a very original three-voiced variant of this example from Mito Taturashvili (63) in the village of Khizabavra with accordion accompaniment; he played middle voice and bass on the accordion.

Very precious information on old Meskhetian repertoire we obtained from Mariam Zhuzhunadze (73), a good connoisseur of Meskhetian traditions, in the village of Muskhi. We would separately mention the information about the form and tradition of performance of the Meskhetian round-dance song Okromchedelo. Mariam assiduously taught both the song and round dance to the members of the expedition.

The stviri, a one-piped wind instrument with finger-holes, has still been used in everyday life as the echo of old Meskhetian traditions. In all three villages there are people who make and play this instrument. We documented the rules for making stviri from Vazha Melikidze (63) and Vaso Ivanidze (65) in Muskhi, Giorgi Diasamidze (78) and Ilusha Ivanidze (78) in Atsqvita, and Mito Taturashvili in Khizabavra. In all these stories the rules, number of finger-holes, their places on the pipe and musical-intonational content are similar. This testifies to the fact that the old Meskhetian tradition of this instrument, which used to be an inseparable part of cattle-rearing, the main farming activities of this region.



Now about the most characteristic repertoire of Meskhetian musical life today: although today you will rarely hear the sound of zurna, duduki, doli and garmoni, that once penetrated into Georgian villages from towns, but in Meskheti they are still used. In Atsqvita, for instance, almost every family has their "musicians", who sing and play together at the wedding parties and other festive occasions. For some objective reasons, we were not able to bring them together. We managed to record Oleg Ivanidze (46) - a member of one of such ensembles. Together with his son and wife he sang modern-type songs from the so-called "wedding" repertoire, such as Ra Lamazi Khar Shen Tushis Kalo, Rotsa Shen Dalalebs Kari Shlis, Sichabuke Da Akhalgazrdoba, etc.

Special mention should be made of Mito Taturashvili from Khizabavra - a virtuoso instrumentalist from the circle of "wedding musicians", who brilliantly plays duduki, zurna, clarinet, various types of salamuri, panduri and accordion.

As mentioned above, many people of various nationalities lived and still live in Meskheti. It is a well-known fact that local Georgians have always had friendly and neighbourly relations with them. More than 60 years have passed since the Turkish population left this region, but those who had good relations with them, still remember Turkish language and songs.

Particularly interesting in our opinion is the rule of reading fairy tales that we recorded from Aniko Zhuzhunadze (71) from Muskha and Zurab Ivanidze (81) from Atsqvita. Here Georgian and Turkish episodes take turns. Also interesting is that the verses to be narrated in Turkish, they sang in Turkish manner. It turned out that in the past these verses used to be accompanied by oriental stringed instrument saz.

As it is known, Akhaltsikhe is an international town. The respect between various nations towards each other is revealed in the ethics of instrumental ensembles as well. For instance, at wedding parties and other occasions the repertoire of Georgian and Armenian instrument players is represented with the char-

acteristic examples of these two nations.

We were very much impressed by the trio of Armenian instrumentalists from Akhaltsikhe: Arsen Melikian (45) - duduki, zurna and clarinet, Khachatur Akopian (45) - accordion, and Garegin Geian (71) - दौरa, doli and vocal. They performed the Armenian melodies Pepo, Mtvarian Ghames and Eghishis Tsekva, and a Georgian song with instrumental accompaniment, Tsiv Zamtarshi.

We believe that the field expedition of 2005 in Meskhet-Javakheti should be followed soon by intensive field work in this region, due to the fact that most folk musicians in this region are quite elderly. There is an urgent need to document these musical traditions before they disappear.

**Tinatin Zhvania**

## **Field Expedition in Khelvachauri District (Achara)**

In August-September 2005, the International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony organized a musicological field expedition to Khelvachauri District in Achara. This was done as part of the UNESCO program. Director of the expedition was Nato Zumbadze, Ph.D. at the Georgian Folk Music Department. Other members of the group were laboratory assistant Otar Kapanadze, students Teona Rukhadze and Salome Tsetskhladze, and video technician Lasha Martashvili.

The aim of the expedition was documentation of the musical examples surviving in the villages of Khelvachauri district. During two weeks we visited about ten villages and recorded a large amount of both musical and verbal material on 7 minidisks, 150 minutes each; we also took about 300 photos and several video clips.



In 1989 a field expedition was organized by Edisher Garaqanidze, Nato Zumbadze and Ketevan Baiashvili, researchers from Tbilisi State Conservatoire. At that time they visited various districts of Achara, including Machakhela Gorge. During the current visit we found out that the natives still remembered the participants of the earlier expedition. The traditionally hospitable Acharans received us with exceptional warmth and did their best to help us when needed.

First we visited the village of Zemo Chkhutuneti, in Machakhela Gorge, and spent several pleasant days there. We recorded several Acharan folk songs (including Naduri, Maqruli, Osa, Nai-Nai and Nanina), instrumental melodies and a few examples of town-style songs. These were performed by wonderful old singers Khusein (Valiko) Kobuladze, Zakro Perselidze and Suleiman (Iago) Nagervadze. Thanks to the digital camera we managed to film the virtuoso dance of 82-year-old Valiko Kobuladze. There is hardly anyone who knows the oldest Acharan dance moves. Vladimer Arjevanidze from the village of Kedkedi came to the village of Zemo Chkhutuneti to help his neighbours with several songs, and played some instrumental pieces on the panduri for us as well. In Zemo Chkhutuneti, together with musical examples, we recorded significant information on the names of voices, form of

performance, origin of songs, traditional repertoire and various rituals.

We also visited the neighbouring villages of Kvemo Chkhutuneti and Chikuneti. We found little of musical interest in Kvemo Chkhutuneti, but collected plenty of verbal information including incantations. Here we met Haidar Kakhidze, who told us many interesting stories about Acharan songs, dances, instruments, and, in general, about various traditions common in Machakhela Gorge.

From the material recorded in the village of Chikuneti, of particular interest are the instrumental pieces performed by 91-year-old Akhmed Gabrushidze on the garmoni (accordion). On behalf of our expedition, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to Shota Kirkitadze, who was our instructor in Chikuneti and performed a number of instrumental pieces for us.

We recorded mostly instrumental melodies and monophonic songs in the villages of Kimati and Maradidi. Shakro Kakhaberidze from Kimati played old variants of Khorumi and Gandagana, and several song melodies on the duduki. Noteworthy are women's songs Gelino, Nai-Nai, Shairebi and instrumental pieces for panduri recorded in Maradidi.

We have warm memories of our visit to Kamil Kakhidze in the village of Kobaleti. Apart from being a very good performer, Kamil is a witty man; he "presented" us with impromptu comic verses written about each member of



*Zakro Perselidze, Khusein Kobuladze, Suleiman Nagervadze from Zeda Chkhutuneti)*



*Vakhtang Khoroshvili from Zemo Jocho)*



our expedition. From him we recorded melodies played on salamuri, duduki and klarneti (clarinet). We also sang several songs together with Kamil.

In the village of Urekhi we met Zurab Varshanidze, a garmoni master. His instruments are indeed distinguished by their magnificent sound. We recorded Zurab's and his brother's virtuoso performance of dance melodies.

Our meeting with the Khoroishvili family in the village of Zemo Jocho was interesting. Of particular mention are Acharan instrumental melodies that the father of the family Vakhtang Khoroishvili played on kemencha (Turkish bowed instrument), as only a few Acharan kemencha pieces have ever been recorded.

To our regret, for various reasons, we could not manage to visit several performers, including the group of singers in the village of Tkhlarni, and a young chiboni player who, according to the natives, is the only one in the whole district. We could not find anyone who would play instrumental pieces on chonguri, or sing Acharan lullabies. This indicates once again, that traditional art is being forgotten in this district, as well as in many other parts of Georgia. But, it is important to mention that elderly singers from Machakhela Gorge are willing to create a folk ensemble in their region. This will help many songs survive from disappearance.

In closing, I would make a special mention of people's hospitality in Achara; this is something rarely found anywhere. The expedition members made good friends with local performers and hosts. On behalf of the expedition I would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Khelvachauri local government administration, and especially to Iakob Abashidze; it would have been very difficult for us to carry out our work without his help. We are very grateful to all our hosts for their cordial welcome and assiduous guidance.

**Otar Kapanadze**

## **"Have your own style. If you imitate someone else, this is not true singing."**

**Interview with  
Andro Simashvili**

I met Andro Simashvili, a song-master and brilliant performer of Kakhetian songs during my recent expedition as part of the project of the International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony. We met in Telavi and discussed the project materials for 2 hours. Later I visited "Uncle Andro" in his native village of Artana and many interesting details supplemented the interview.

Andro Simashvili is a true Georgian man with a deep knowledge of his native country and its history. He is an assiduous man, exclusive host, brilliant interlocutor and connoisseur of his mother tongue. The 82-year-old singer is a living chronicle of Kakhetian song. He speaks about Georgian song with passion and enthusiasm, and cannot imagine himself without it.

In 1952, when the folkloric expedition of Tbilisi State Conservatoire led by Grigol Chkhikvadze was recording songs in Artana, 29-year-old Andro was in Eniseli. In this village located in Qvareli district he was a deputy cultural director at the vocational school. He did not attend the recording process, but he knows that people gathered at the local administration office.

A.S.: "My uncle Abria (Abram Simashvili) did not go there; he hid himself. Much earlier, in 1937, Vano Mchedlishvili was entrusted by the government to select singers for the Days of Georgian Culture in Moscow. On his visit to Artana, Mchedlishvili visited our family. Here he met my uncle and heard him sing. Abria always sang when we had guests. This was not just singing; he lit a fire in those listening! When Mchedlishvili told Abria that he was going to take him to Tbilisi and then to Moscow, he got up at daybreak, went away and did not return for a week. Mchedlishvili spent 4 days at our house waiting for Abria to come back. Abria observed from afar and if he would see that





Mchedlishvili was still there, he would go to the vineyard and sleep in a hut there. Mchedlishvili had even told Abria that he might have to sing at the Opera House in Tbilisi. But this did not interest Abria. He said: "What am I to do there? Life for me is when I lie down here in the vineyard and gaze at the rows of vines, with bunches of grapes hanging on them."

Giorgi Simashvili, Uncle Andro's father, and Solomon Chachauri (their neighbour) were soloists of the songs recorded in Artana in 1952. Whenever Giorgi had guests, Solomon was always there. Solomon knew only a few songs including Chakrulo and Mokle Mravalzhamieri. Usually Giorgi would sing I voice and Solomon the II voice, but both could sing either.

A.S.: "We paid our last respect to Solomon Chachauri by singing Chakrulo at his funeral. He used to sing this song with particular, distinctive colouring.

Mokle Mravalzhamieri was the first song to open big supras (parties / celebrations) within our family. Later we would perform it in the beginning of our concerts. There were 4 or 5 groups of singers at the supra and there was real competition in singing. One group would start the song, and another would finish it."

Uncle Andro listened to the old expedition recording of Mokle Mravalzhamieri. As soon as it ended, he continued singing I (high) voice; his pupil joined in with II voice.

A.S.: "The final part is missing on the recording. If there had been other singers at the supra, they would have finished it like this. About 50 songs used to be sung at the supra. Each toast was followed by a song and it went on like this until the party broke up."

N.Z.: "Which songs were they?"

A.S.: "Mokle Mravalzhamieri was followed by Grdzeli Mravalzhamieri, Chakrulo, Shashvi-Kakabi, Beri Katsi Var, Gushin Shvidni Gurjanelni and so on. One more thing: Abria

used to perform a song of particular style. On the melody of Zhuzhuna Tsvima he would sing different text: Kargi Katsisa Tsoloba Rad Gikharia Kalao (Woman, why are you so happy to be a wife of a good man). He embellished the song with so many ornamentations! (Here Uncle Andro sings all three voice parts in turn for us)."

Uncle Andro's ancestors come from Pshavi, from the village of Artani in Tianeti district. In the second half of the 17th century they migrated down to Kakheti and named the new settlement after their original place of residence.

A.S.: "My ancestors were given this place to make their home. After having settled down, they built a church dedicated to Christ and called it Ghvtaeba. Its official registration name is Simaant Ghvtaeba. Thus, we have our ancestral church. At one time must have been many people there with the last name Simashvili . . . Long time ago there lived the Qarashvilis, famous singers, in Artana: only two families and they were cousins. I do not remember them, because they were evicted from the village in 1924. Whenever they had guests, they would always invite my father and uncle. My father learned singing not only from the Qaralashvilis, but from other renowned singers too. My uncle Abria sang with Parnaoz Qaralashvili. He used to say: "My voice is nothing compared to Parnaoz's." Uncle Abria himself had a strong voice; even if having sung for three days, his voice would not fail and he would never get tired. He drank a lot of wine, was a very hard-working person."

The founder of the ensemble in Artana was Mikheil Simashvili, Uncle Andro's elder brother. There were about 100 songs, both folk and composed in Soviet times, in the ensemble's repertoire.

During our conversation Uncle Andro illustrates voice parts of various songs like a true song-master; He often made mention of I and II voices; I asked him to specify what he meant and which voice began this or that song. He calls high voice I voice, and middle voice is II voice.

We also touched on the singing style.

A.S.: "A singer must have his own singing style. He must never copy or try to imitate someone. This is not true singing. Anyone will recognize Hamlet Gonashvili's voice, but I am very much against copying him."

N.Z.: "Uncle Andro, is there anyone from your generation who can sing like you and be your counterpart?"

A.S.: "There are only two people from the old ensemble in Artana. They sing I and II voices. One of them was my pupil (he suffered



a tragedy . . .); the other is from the village of Vanta. He sings I voice, but his voice is low and weak. His name is Ushangi Sharvashidze and he is 75."

Uncle Andro teaches a children's group in Telavi twice a week - on Fridays and Saturdays. He believes that nothing must impede children's studies. He prefers to "disturb" himself.

Andro Simashvili was born on 6 October, 1923 in Artana.

A.S.: "I vaguely remember some episodes before the 1930s: many guests in our house and singing, carousing and feasting. Whenever my father's or grandfather's friends or relatives met in Telavi, they would mention that they had not been to our place for a long time and would make an immediate decision to visit us in Artana. And so, they would catch a carriage and come to us. The family would start preparing the banquet at once. Everything was so bounteous in those times . . ."

**N.Z.: "Did people go on Alilo in your childhood?"**

A.S.: "Yes, they did on the night before. These were mostly little boys, herdsmen (some were pig-tenders, others shepherds or cowherds). They would go door-to-door on the eve; they sang a specific song, a very simple Alilo, not so interesting."

**N.Z.: "Did you hear any variant like the modern Aratanuli Alilo in old times?"**

A.S.: "Yes, and here is how it happened: This was on Christmas Eve in 1930. The preparations for Christmas were underway. Suddenly the dog began to bark in the yard. I woke up. Some people came upstairs to our balcony, called: "Blessings to You! Blessings to You!" and started singing Alilo. This Alilo impressed me so much that years later when I heard Hamlet Gonashvili's singing on the radio, I thought to myself: "Oh my, is that man come back to life?" There were three young men, possibly in their late thirties. One of them started the song and before he completed the solo section, my father and uncle went out to the yard, stood beside them and my uncle Abria joined in with I voice; others sang bass. The table was already laid. They sang Alilo together maybe 7 times that day. Then they moved to our neighbor's house, sang for them too, toasted to the family and left. This has always remained in my memory. Then the era of collectivization began. Gradually these old ritual events receded into the background. New revolutionary songs were brought to the forefront."

**N.Z.: "What changed in the Alilo tradition?"**

A.S.: "The tradition did not stop, but Alilo was sung on the melody of another song; this was dedicated to Stalin with the text like this: "Stalin, our countryman, our beneficent man. " Today they will come and just call "Alilo, Alilo, Alilo" and leave immediately. That is all!

It must have been in 1966 when Sasha Chikvaidze from Napareuli came to visit my father. Sasha was a good singer, and my uncle Abria's counterpart. They used to sing very beautifully together. We laid the table, they sat down at a table and recalled past years. Sasha said to my uncle: "Abria, let's sing Alilo; we haven't sung it for a long time." And they did. Something strange happened to me that night; the melody transfixed itself in my mind. In sleep I remembered every nuance bit by bit - where the voice went up or down, how one voice moved on to another, etc. Next day I went to the vineyard. I worked and again this song obsessively seized hold of me. I could not get rid of it. Ioseb Chakhutashvili, my singing partner in the choir, lived near the vineyard. I went to his house, told him what the story was and asked him to help restore this variant of Alilo. I knew I voice, but for II voice there should be a partner! We had to revive the song at once before I forgot the melody. So we lay down on the green grass and practiced in low voice until sunset. Finally we brushed up the song. Next day we had choir rehearsal. My brother Mikheil came from Telavi. We sang the song for him. He made a couple of his corrections."

**N.Z.: "Uncle Andro, what was the ritual for Easter in past times?"**

A.S.: "My father and uncles would walk round the Ghvtaeba church singing "Christ is risen from the dead" (Here Uncle Andro sings all three voice parts in turn). By the way, this is



*Interview with Andro Simashvili*



like a sacred hymn, but since the church was dedicated to the name of Christ, they would circumambulate the church singing this chant three times. After this they would have a supra near the church and ordinary table songs would be performed."

**N.Z.:** "Was there any special kind of round dance for Easter?"

**A.S.:** "No, here we did not have any. But I remember once my brothers and I sang Shavlego and our father told us that it was a round-dance song and that the song would move on the round dance as soon as the verbal text was completed." (And again Uncle Andro sings all three voice parts in turn).

**N.Z.:** "What about other round-dance songs if you know any?"

**A.S.:** "Sometimes we would accompany Visia Visia, with dance. When the text of the song was through with the words: "Aba, bicho, dauare, he, he, perkhulits chamouare, he, he..." (Go ahead boy, and dance a round dance!). I did not know anything about round dances then. Irakli Khmaladze, a choreographer helped us. He came to Eniseli and we prepared this dance there in a few days."

**N.A.:** "What ritual did you perform against bad weather?"

**A.S.:** "Gonjaoba. In rainy seasons, women - young and old, would make a doll-like creature, would walk door-to-door and sing:



*Andro Simashvili with his young students in Telavi*

"Gonjaobaze davdivart, Gonjav, gvitsqaleo, aghar gvinda talakhi, ekhla gvinda korakhi." (This is Gonjaoba. Gonja have mercy on us. We've had enough mud, now we beg for dry soil. There was no bass part in this song, and in general, no harmony. Each participant sang in her own way. People would give them food and wine. Once during drought, people in Napareuli put the plough into the water, the women hitched themselves to it and sang: "Aghar gvinda korakhi, ekhla gvinda talakhi." (We've had enough dry soil, now we beg for mud)."

**N.Z.:** "Gonja was the name of the doll, wasn't it?"

**A.S.:** "Yes, probably because it was ugly (Gonji is a Georgian word for ugly). It was neither a man nor a woman, and was dressed in rags. Sometimes it would even have long beard or moustache."

**N.Z.:** "Uncle Andro, what kind of lamentation over the deceased is common here?"

**A.S.:** "Lamentation accompanied with bass. Some people were masters of bewailing - good keeners and bass performers. I myself remember two women, but they have passed away. Any person who interfered was asked to stop singing. No lamentation went without bass accompaniment. When one keener was through, another one would substitute her, then another would take turn and so on. In recent years this tradition has changed; people do not cry for the specific person who died; each woman cries for her own deceased relatives."

Lately Uncle Andro has had as he says, "other interests" too - he has composed a song on the basis of folk materials, namely the Tushetian ritual of Dalaoba. This is a three-voiced song, unlike its traditional source. He has another song too - Aragvelebis Lashkruli . .

There is no end to our conversation. Each question is followed by answer, each answer by song, each song by round dance and over again. No wonder! Andro Simashvili thrives on singing.

**Natalia Zumbadze**



Georgian Folk Song - New Transcription

ვახტანგური  
Vakhtanguri

transcribed by  
Otar Kapanadze

First system of musical notation. It consists of three staves (treble, alto, and bass clefs). The melody is in the treble clef. The lyrics are written below the staves.

Lyrics: O ho o de - li - a de - li - a

de - li - a de - li - a

Second system of musical notation. It consists of three staves. The melody continues in the treble clef. The lyrics are written below the staves.

Lyrics: di - do u - do van - di - la di - do u - do van - di - la ba vo vov - de - li - e

Third system of musical notation. It consists of three staves. The melody continues in the treble clef. The lyrics are written below the staves.

Lyrics: na - ni - na he o u di - la re - ra o - re - ra - vo

Fourth system of musical notation. It consists of three staves. The melody continues in the treble clef. The lyrics are written below the staves.

Lyrics: da de - lis vov - de - li - a - v da ov - de - li - e - vo ra - ni - ne - i da he